

## 6/12/08 Woods Bay Section 20 Community Meeting

### Discussion Points:

#### Introduction:

At the recent Woods Bay Section 20 Community Meeting, DNRC personnel outlined in detail the Trust Lands mandate ("Managing the State of Montana's trust land resources to provide revenues for the trust beneficiaries while considering environmental factors and protecting the future income-generating capacity of the land"), which is the cornerstone for how decisions are made relating to the Woods Bay Section 20 parcel. They also outlined some potential alternatives to land banking that can be set up to meet the Trust Lands mandate and which have been employed for various purposes in other land use projects. Also on hand was Dave Landstrom of Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; Steve Brady, Swan Lake District Ranger; and Diane Conradi, a neutral third party and attorney experienced in Trust Lands law, who has worked on projects with similar community goals. Via approximately 400 comments, DNRC has heard that the public does not wish to see the Woods Bay Section 20 parcel land banked, and has temporarily placed the land banking on hold in hopes that the community can partner with DNRC to identify and implement an alternative that will better suit the local community's desires as well as meet the Trust Lands mandate.

A public comment period ensued, with focus occurring on two primary areas: 1) alternatives to land banking & related details/concerns/specifics; and 2) the evaluation process for alternatives – in other words, how to best form a working group and determine a proposal for an alternative to land banking. What follows below are the lists that were taken from the flip charts employed during that discussion period. (An additional section labeled "parking lot" delineates those items that may have been sidebar to the primary discussion, or also those items that are outside this potential working group's control.)

The next step will be to work together to form a working group to come up with a viable alternative that meets both the Trust Lands mandate as well as the community's desires. Various suggestions were put forth by community members for how this could occur, but the community did not identify a clear choice at the 6/12/08 meeting.

**Consequently, to assist the creation of a working group, DNRC will schedule a meeting for those interested on Monday, July 21, 2008 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church in Bigfork,** with the goal of this meeting to be to identify a core group of community members to work in an ongoing fashion with DNRC on the project of identifying and implementing alternatives to land banking on the Woods Bay Section 20 parcel.

*Ideas/comments are depicted in approximately the order they were suggested verbally (and may be somewhat duplicated), within each of the three categories (alternatives; evaluation; parking lot):*

#### **I. Options/Alternatives to Land Banking**

1. USFS Land Exchange
2. Natural Area Designation
  - Joint Operation with Neighboring USFS
  - FWP Management Involvement
  - Local Committee Involvement
3. Can we just write a check and get it done?
4. Likes natural areas idea; with addition of exchange of other land that Montana School of Mines would want to use – or conservation easement protection.
5. Land banking method not a necessary alternative to reasonable return

**Considerations associated with various alternatives (these were not identified as being connected with specific proposals but rather are listed as received during the comment session):**

- living classroom. Great but permanent road needed through USFS
- need disability access
- need parking
- when was last wildlife inventory done?
- Logging can complement and help other uses, and reduce wildfire risks
- In the interim, could DNRC use temporary access to clean up land/fire risk
- Wants a good public access to land
- Timber sale would benefit land
- Management not getting proper attention
- More analysis of access available through county land/Red Gate road
- What is sufficient access to DNRC?
- Needs to be a permanent solution
- Collaborative process review through case studies
- Trust's obligation to produce revenues is perpetual
- Review private/public conservation easements
- Right to develop
- How to raise money to purchase development rights to enable land to be reserved for conservation (predictability)
- Consider leases/licenses vs. sale (less predictable – more predictable)
- Where does the money come from?
  - Private funds
  - Leveraging other private money
- Must initiate a transaction with state to move to an appraisal process
- Code on MCA. Worthy objects helpful to...
- Does this meet the designation of "other uses." How does this relate to subsequent code and Attorney General's opinion on same?
- Mandate is to maximize the value of land. If sold, it will never go back to public. Reactions not just local
- Why revenue for this parcel and not three local agricultural parcels?
- Not all values are denominated in \$\$
- Concerned – objects to a fast process – moratorium

- Or, is this paralysis through analysis?
- Feels it's "my forest," wants to know that the "right thing" is done
- Is the 30 days reasonable to organize?
- This involves more than local property; this is a state issue, and relates to generations in the future
- Can inputs from tonight be posted on website?
- Want to know potential costs for alternatives?
- Can we identify representative (not actual) costs?
- Why sell? Access?
- Can you force access? (eminent domain)
- Note: what is the quality of timber/zones? What are topographical zones?
- Legally, is there enough intrinsic value in some areas of parcel to allow relief from the compensation mandate?
- Is value of benefic. value on timber sales or revalues?

## **II. Evaluation Process**

M.E.P.A. (Environmental Review)

How to form a group

- What does DNRC need?
- Develop a proposal
- Wildlife survey

Group of 12, could be:

- 5 Woods Bay
- 3 Bigfork
- 2 DNRC
- 1 USFS
- 1 Biologist

Collaborative process

Well Documented

- EQC website includes a study re: trust land
- Whitefish Neighborhood Plan provides examples of community conserving trust lands
- Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork (CFBB) can facilitate
- Jack Stanford should be involved in the process (on committee)

How much does DNRC/Beneficiary need annually? Community needs to know.

Select a small group to work on the issues and get back to large group.

Website – submit biography for interested people. Community members could vote to select.

Slow down a process.

Speed up the process.

Meet again (30 days) with meeting objective of selecting committee.

Graph/Chart - Unpredict.

### **III. Parking Lot Items:**

Last wildlife inventory?

MEPA?

Species?

Can trust beneficiary be relocated to more local connection (i.e., is it possible for trust lands to support institutions located within their “neighborhoods”)